



Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

THERE was once a poor widow who lived in a lonely little cottage, in front of which was a garden, where two rose-trees bloomed, one of which bore a white rose and the other a red. Now, the widow had two children, who were like the rose-trees, for one was called Snow-White and the other Rose-Red.

The two children loved each other so dearly that whenever they walked out together they walked hand in hand. Very often they went out into the wood by themselves to pick berries, but the wild beasts would not harm them. If they happened to stay too long in the wood and the night came on, they just lay down, side by side, upon the moss, and slept until the morning dawned, and as the mother knew this, she was never anxious about them.

The children lived a very happy life with their dear mother in their pretty cottage home. In the evenings the mother would say:



"NOW, Snow-White, bolt the door," and then they seated themselves round the hearth, and the mother put on her spectacles and read to them out of a great big book, whilst the girls sat at their spinning-wheels and listened.

One winter's evening, as they all sat comfortably together, some one knocked at the door as though he wished to be let in.

"Quick, Rose-Red," said the mother, "open the door. Very likely some poor wanderer has come to seek shelter."

Rose-Red ran to push back the bolt and open the door, thinking to see a poor man, but instead, a great black bear pushed his big head in and looked at them.

Rose-Red screamed with fright, and Snow-White ran to hide herself behind her mother's bed.

But the bear told them not to be afraid, for that he would not hurt them. "I am half-frozen with the cold," he said, "and only wish to warm myself a little."

"Poor fellow," answered the mother.



"LIE down by the fire, but see that you do not burn your thick fur coat."

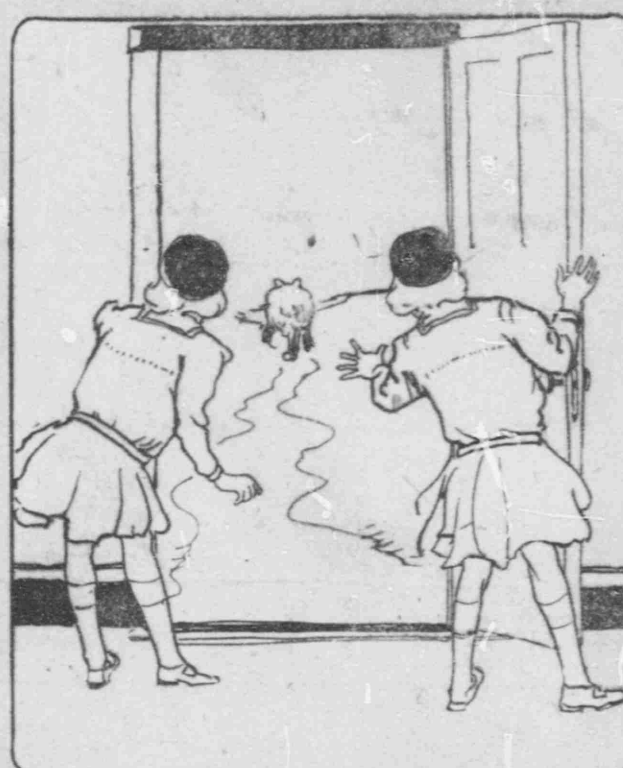
Then she called the children and told them to have no fear, for the bear would not harm them, but was an honest and respectable fellow.

So Snow-White and Rose-Red crept out from their hiding-places, and were not the least afraid of the bear, who asked the children to brush the snow from his fur for him. They fetched a broom and brushed the thick, black coat till not a single flake remained, and then the bear stretched himself comfortably in front of the fire, and growled gently with content. The bear stayed with them all the winter long, and they all learned to love him dearly.

When spring came, and the whole world was fresh and green, the bear told Snow-White one morning that he was going away.

"Where are you going to, dear bear?" asked Snow-White.

"I must stay in the wood and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs."



"IN THE winter, when the ground is frozen hard, they cannot work their way through it, and are obliged to stay below in their caves; but now that the warm sun has thawed the earth, they will soon break through it, and come out to steal what they can find, and that which once goes into their caves seldom comes out again."

Snow-White grieved sadly over the parting. As she unbolted the door and the bear hurried through, a piece of his coat caught on the latch and was torn off, and it seemed to the child that she saw a glimmer of gold beneath it, but she was not sure. The bear ran quickly away, and soon disappeared behind the trees.

Some time afterward the mother sent the children into the wood to gather sticks. They came to a great tree which lay felled, and beside which something kept jumping up and down in the grass.

At first they could not make out what it was, but as they came nearer they saw it was a dwarf



HE HAD an old withered face, and a snow-white beard an ell long, at least. The end of his beard had been fast caught in a split tree, and the little creature jumped about like a little dog at the end of a string, and knew not how to help himself.

He glared at the little girls with fierce red eyes and screamed, "Why do you stand staring there instead of coming to help me?"

"Have patience," said Snow-White, "I know what to do." And drawing her scissors from her pocket she cut off the end of the old man's beard.

As soon as the dwarf was free he grabbed at a bag of gold which was hidden amongst the roots of the tree, threw it across his shoulders, and grumbled out: "What clumsy folk, to be sure—to cut off a piece of my beautiful beard! Bad luck to you!" and then, without a word of thanks to the children, away he went.

It happened that soon afterward the mother sent her two little girls into the town to buy needles and thread, laces and ribbons.



THEIR way led them across a piece of land where great rocks lay scattered about. There they saw a huge bird hovering in the air above.

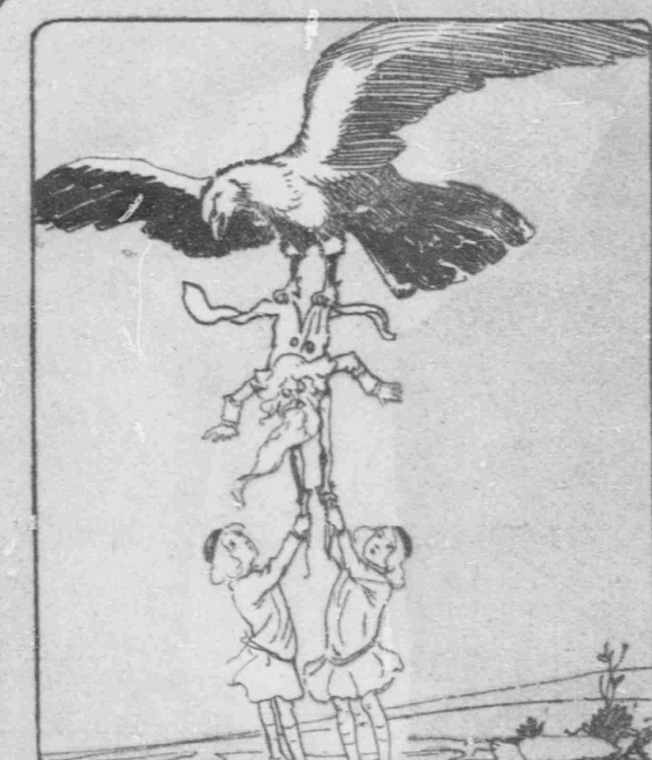
Lower and lower it sank, until at last it settled upon a rock close by, and immediately they heard a piercing shriek. They hurried toward the sound, and saw to their horror that the eagle had seized upon their old acquaintance, the dwarf, and was carrying him off.

The kind-hearted children at once took hold of the little man, and held him with might and main, so that the eagle was obliged to give up its prey. As soon as the dwarf had recovered from his fright he cried in his rasping voice:

"Could you not have been a little more careful? See, you have torn my delicate coat, so that it is all rags. Stupid, clumsy creatures that you are!"

Then he took up a bag full of precious stones, and slipped down into his den beneath the rock.

The children then went on their way and did their marketing in town.



ON THEIR way home they again met the dwarf. He had emptied his sack of precious stones upon a smooth place, little thinking to be surprised by any one at such a late hour.

The evening sun shone upon the glistening heap of gems, and made them sparkle and flash so prettily, that the children stood still to look at them.

"Why do you stand gaping there?" screamed the dwarf, his ashen gray face crimson with wrath. He would have continued to scold, but at that moment loud growls were heard, and a big black bear came shambling out of the wood.

In terror the dwarf sprang toward his cave, but the bear was too near and he could not reach it. Then he cried in his despair, "Dear Mr. Bear, spare me, I pray you, and I will give you all my treasures. Here are these two wicked girls, take them and eat them; you will find them tender morsels, and as fat as young quails."



THE bear took no heed of his words, but gave the wicked little creature one stroke with his paw, and he never moved again.

The two girls had begun to run away, but the bear now called to them, "Snow-White, Rose-Red, do not be afraid. If you will wait for me I will come with you."

They recognized his voice at once, and stood still, and as the bear came up to them his fur coat suddenly fell off and he stood there, a fine handsome man, dressed all in shining gold.

"I am a king's son," he said, "and I was condemned by the wicked dwarf, who had stolen all my treasure, to become a bear and run wild in the woods, until I should be released by his death. He has now received his well-earned reward."

Shortly afterward the disenchanted prince married little Snow-White, while Rose-Red was betrothed to his brother, and they divided between them all the beautiful treasures which the dwarf had collected in his cave.